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Weekly Situation Report
on
International Terrorism

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27 July 1977

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WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

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BACKGROUND ARTICLEHow The Montoneros Struck It Rich

One of the most lucrative kidnappings of all times was staged by the Montoneros in Buenos Aires on 19 September 1974. While their abduction of the two Born brothers was, strictly speaking, an internal Argentine matter, the ransom which was exacted has since then allowed the Montoneros to engage in numerous terrorist incidents which have been truly international in character.

According to information provided by leaders of the Montoneros, the planning of the operation against the Born brothers began during late 1973 or early 1974. The Montoneros decided that the firm of Bunge and Born, a multinational conglomerate, was guilty of exploiting its workers, was the "enemy" of small and medium size rural producers who were "bankrupted" by the company's monopolistic policies, and was "acting for its own benefit and profit and not in accord with the national interests of the countries where its businesses were established."

The Montoneros concluded that a kidnapping operation should be conducted against the Bunge and Born company and it should be developed as follows: (1) collection of information on the company itself and on its principal leaders; (2) surveillance of target individuals to establish weaknesses in their defenses; (3) selection of the ambush site; (4) selection of Montonero members to participate in the operation; (5) execution of the ambush itself with subsequent escape of the kidnapers; and finally, (6) announcement of a "trial" of those abducted and imposition of a "sentence" which would include a ransom payment.

The information section of the Montoneros provided the preliminary targeting information. After this initial survey and target analysis, which took several months, it was decided that Jorge Born, Jr., should be the major target of the abduction, since he was the third most important man in the firm and would be the one to direct it in the future. The two senior members of the company, Jorge Born, Sr., and Mario Hirsh, were not chosen because both were considered

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too elderly. When it was observed that Jorge Born, Jr., was normally accompanied by his brother Juan, the Montoneros decided to kidnap both brothers.

The terrorists learned that the Born family lived in the Beccar section of the city, and traveled to their offices in the Federal District every day, Monday through Friday, with great regularity. Each morning a three-car caravan would leave the home, and after leaving children in one of the area's private schools, two of the cars would follow a fixed route to the Born offices. It was determined that the family had at its disposal a total of seven vehicles.

The route used by the Born family was over main streets which were normally choked with traffic and well-patrolled by police units. The kidnapers decided they would deal with this situation by blocking off a short section of the main avenue a minute before the Born vehicles arrived, detouring the Borns to a side street, and then reopening the route before police units discovered the trick. In searching for an obvious reason for a detour, the kidnapers discovered that workers were pruning trees along a section of the main avenue. The next step in this phase of the operation was the selection of the specific side street where the kidnapers could divert the Born vehicles and capture the two brothers.

Thirty Montoneros were chosen for the operation and they were divided into five teams. One team, consisting of three members, was to block the main avenue and then lift the barricade once the Born cars had turned. A nine-man team was to protect the blockaders and then move quickly to the kidnaping site and help protect that team. Two groups consisting of five men each (one dressed as a uniformed policeman) were to crash pickup trucks into the Born automobiles in a fake accident. A fifth team, with six men (including the overall operation leader), would actually kidnap the brothers. Finally, a two-man subteam would eliminate a gatekeeper on the escape route.

The attack was set for 19 September 1974. On that date, according to plan, the Born caravan was detoured onto the side street and the Montoneros' two pickup trucks collided with the Ford Falcons belonging to the Borns. The Montonero disguised as a uniformed policeman, plus six "plainclothes" Montoneros, succeeded in keeping the Borns' guards occupied,

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ostensibly trying to arrest them in connection with the auto accident, while the six-man team removed the Born brothers from their car and led them to one of the waiting escape vehicles. The two Montoneros who had attacked the gatekeeper calmly walked away, leaving two smashed Ford Falcons, two pickup trucks, and five cars--with honking horns--which had been accidentally detoured onto the side street along with the Born caravan.

The Montoneros held a trial of the Born brothers and followed it with a sentencing. The sentence called for the following: a payment equivalent to \$60 million U.S. in cash to the Montoneros, with another \$1 million U.S. in goods to be distributed to specified sectors of the Argentine public; the personal involvement of the Born brothers in company/union negotiations in factories controlled by the Born family; placement of busts of Juan and Eva Peron in all Born factories; and finally, publication of leaflets throughout Argentina to let the public know that the distribution of the goods was made under pressure from the Montoneros as part of the ransom for the safe release of the Born brothers.

The ransom demands were met to the satisfaction of the Montoneros, and the Born brothers were released unharmed several months after the kidnaping.

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